

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9467

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 04329

EXDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, IR, IZ, UK

SUBJECT: SHAH'S EXPLANATION OF IRAN-IRAQ AGREEMENT;

PRINCE FAH'D'S ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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SUMMARY: BOTH SHAH OF IRAN AND SAUDI PRINCE FAH'D HAVE TOLD BRITISH THEY WERE VERY IMPRESSED BY SADDAM HUSSEIN IN ALGIERS. SHAH INDICATES ACT OF FAITH REPRESENTED BY AGREEMENT WITH IRAQ IS CHANCE WORTH TAKING IN VIEW OF IMMINENT DANGER OF ESCALATED HOSTILITIES BETWEEN IRAN AND IRAQ. PRINCE FAH'D PLANS TO VISIT BAGHDAD TO TRY TO GET SAUDI BORDER SETTLEMENT WITH IRAQ. END SUMMARY.

1. FCO'S ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY WEIR TOLD US MARCH 19 THAT BRITISH AMBASSADOR PARSONS RECENTLY HAD AUDIENCE WITH THE SHAH IN WHICH SHAH EXPLAINED WHY HE HAD MADE AGREEMENT WITH IRAQ. SHAH TOLD PARSONS THAT IN VIEW OF IRAQI MILITARY SUCCESSES IRAN WOULD HAVE HAD TO ESCALATE ITS MILITARY INTERVENTION ON KURDS' BEHALF DURING THIS YEAR'S FIGHTING SEASON BEGINNING IN THE SPRING. THIS CARRIED GREAT RISK OF ALL-OUT WARFARE WITH IRAQ. AT THE SAME TIME, SHAH SAID, KURDISH LEADER BARZANI WAS GROWING OLD AND GENERALLY SLOWING DOWN. SHAH HAD BEEN VERY IMPRESSED BY SADDAM HUSSEIN'S ATTITUDE IN ALGIERS. HUSSEIN HAD AGREED TO THE THALWEG LINE AND HAD EVEN PROPOSED COLLABORATION BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN IN AFFAIRS OF THE GULF. SHAH ADMITTED AGREEMENT REPRESENTED SOMETHING OF AN ACT OF FAITH ON HIS PART AND INDICATED HE WOULD PLAY ALONG WITH HUSSEIN ON TALK OF COLLABORATION UNTIL HE SEES MORE SOLID EVIDENCE OF HUSSEIN'S SINCERITY.

2. BRITISH AGREE THAT SHAH HAS COMMITTED AN ACT OF FAITH. THEY NOTE THAT THALWEG LINE HAD BECOME SOMETHING OF A PERSONAL SYMBOL FOR HIM SO THAT HUSSEIN'S READINESS TO YIELD ON THAT SCORE ASSUMED VERY GREAT IMPORTANCE. AT THE SAME TIME PACIFICATION OF THE KURDS WILL RELEASE IRAQI RESOURCES FOR POSSIBLE USE ELSEWHERE. FOR EXAMPLE, BRITISH DO NOT THINK THAT IRAQIS WILL BE READY TO SETTLE THEIR BORDER PROBLEM WITH KUWAIT ON TERMS WHICH KUWAIT COULD ACCEPT. KUWAITIS ARE ALREADY WORRIED ABOUT THAT.

3. WHEN SAUDI PRINCE FAH'D WAS RECENTLY IN LONDON (LONDON 4002 NOTAL) HE TOLD BRITISH HE TOO HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY SADDAM HUSSEIN IN ALGIERS. HE PLANS TO GO TO BAGHDAD EARLY IN APRIL TO TRY TO SETTLE THE SAUDI FRON-
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TIER PROBLEM WITH IRAQ (THE NEUTRAL ZONE). PREDICTABLY, FAH'D TALKED OF CLOSER COOPERATION WITH THE SHAH ON GULF AFFAIRS. FAH'D INDICATED HE WOULD PROBABLY ALSO GO TO KUWAIT TO PUT FINISHING TOUCHES ON BOUNDARY SETTLEMENT THERE.

4. COMMENT: BRITISH WERE CLEARLY AS SURPRISED AS EVERYBODY ELSE BY THE AGREEMENT. THEY ARE NOT BEING PRESSED

VERY HARD DOMESTICALLY ON BEHALF OF THE KURDS AND GENERALLY WELCOME THE AGREEMENT IF IT HOLDS. THEY REALIZE THAT IT REPLACES RECENT FEAR OF SERIOUS WARFARE BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN BY MORE TRADITIONAL FEARS OF IRAQI MEDDLING ELSEWHERE IN THE AREA. THEY NOTE ISRAELIS AND KUWAITIS HAVE BECOME CONCERNED. ON THE WHOLE, HOWEVER, THEY ARE PREPARED TO WAIT AND SEE. END COMMENT.

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